

Literary Devices Used in *Speak*

Alliteration:

Definition: Repetition of the same letter sounds. [Assonance – repetition of vowel sounds; Consonance – repetition of consonant sounds.] Draws attention to the words.

Your own example:

Sally sells sea shells by the sea shore. / Mighty Mighty Mustangs! / Greta Garbo

Examples from *Speak* (pg #s):

“geek gear” (7) “Merryweather Pride, all perk and pep and purple” (26) “We are the Wombats, woozy, wicked Wombats! Worried, withdrawn, weepy, weird Wombats” (69). / “...gross gummy...” (74). / “...sweaty smiling teeth sucking...” (130) / “We are the hornets, horney horney hornets” (141).

Literary Devices Used in *Speak*

Allusion:

Definition: An implied or direct reference to an already existing “text” – book, piece of art, music, etc.

Your own example:

John Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men* takes its title from the poem “To a Mouse”.

Calling someone a “Romeo”, alludes to *Romeo & Juliet*, which itself makes many allusions to Greek Mythology: “Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds, / Towards Phoebus’ lodging. Such a wagoner / As Phaeton would ...” (III.ii.1-3). *A Raisin in the Sun* “30 pieces of silver, and not a coin less” – bible.

Examples from *Speak* (pg #s):

“Waiting for a prince to come and princessify her with a smooch? (81) “Mount Saint Mom” (87) “And wolfsmiles, showing oh granny what big teeth you have” (97)

“I wonder if Hester tried to say no. She’s kind of quiet. We would get along. I can see us, living in the woods, her wearing that A, me with an S maybe, S for silent, for stupid, for scared. S for silly. For shame” (101). “My face becomes a Picasso sketch,

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my body slicing into dissecting cubes” (124). “A trip to the Neighborhood of Make-Believe would be nice. Maybe I could stay with Daniel Striped Tiger in his tree house” (165). “May is finally here and it has stopped raining. Good thing, too – the mayor ... was about to put out a call for a guy named Noah” (165). “The chain-saw murderer” (187).

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Figurative Language:

Definition: Language used to create vivid images for readers that communicate more than literal meaning [Ex: metaphors, similes, images ...]

Your own example:

The billowing curtains lift into the warm sweet smelling air.

Examples from *Speak* (pg #s):

“I dive into the stream of 4th period lunch students, and swim down the hall to the cafeteria” (7). “A block of ice freezes our section of the bleachers” (28). “... the snowball in my throat” (72) “who use words so long I’m surprised they don’t snowball in my throat” (72) “who use words so long I’m surprised they don’t choke” (112) “... a hundred banshees flying on the edge of the blizzard” (130). “I rake the leaves out of my throat” (168).

Literary Devices Used in *Speak*

Slide 1

Imagery:

Definition: The formation of mental images through the use of the five senses to create visuals with words.

Your own example:

The never-ending seas spanned as far as the eye could see.

Examples from *Speak* (pg #s):

“A block of ice freezes our section of the bleachers” (28) “dead roaches crocheted together with cobwebs” (26)

“Little rabbit heart leaps out of my chest and scampers across the paper, leaving bloody footprints on my roots ... I smell him” (160). / “...Metal hands, hot knife Hands” (194). / “I look at my canoe feet and my wet, obnoxious ankle bones” (123).

“The tears dissolve the last block of ice in my throat. I feel the frozen stillness melt

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down through the inside of me, dripping shards of ice that vanish in a puddle of sunlight on the stained floor. Words float up” (198). “Even through the river in my eyes” (198).

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Irony:

Definition: The use of words to express something other than, and especially the opposite, of the literal meaning. **Situational** – The strangeness in a situation **Dramatic** – Audience knows more than the characters **Verbal** – Saying the opposite of what you mean.

Your own example:

SI: The fire department catches on fire. **VI:** A server drops a tray and people say “nice job”. **DI:** A victim goes into a basement where we know the killer is waiting.

DI: From the sixth line of the play, we know that Romeo and Juliet will die.

Examples from *Speak* (pg #s):

VI: “Who knew there had been a war with the whole world?” (7) **VI:** “Nice seeing you again too” (7) **VI:** “I know I’m shocked” (49)

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Metaphor:

Definition: A figure of speech that makes a comparison between two unlike things in which one thing becomes another thing *without* the use of “like” “as” “than” or “resembles”.

Your own example:

“A sea of troubles” “All the world’s a stage”

Examples from *Speak* (pg #s):

“A wounded zebra in a national geographic special” “I follow the basketball pole” (8) “Mr. Neck storms into class, a bull chasing thirty-three red flags” (53). “I watch the Eruptions. Mount Dad, long, dormant, now considered armed & dangerous. Mount Saint Mom, oozing lava, spitting flame” (87). “Bunny rabbit bolts” Melinda as a rabbit (97). “Mother is the rock, I am the ocean. ... she finally wears down and crumbles into a thousand grains of beach sand” (120).

Literary Devices Used in *Speak*

Personification:

Definition: Giving human qualities to an animal or inanimate object.

Your own example:

The fog crept in ... / The cave yawned open ... / The crowd swallowed her ...

Examples from *Speak* (pg #s):

“The school bus wheezes to my corner” (3). “Words climb up my throat” (5).

“The couch has two personalities” (15) “All her clothes wait patiently on hangers ... the room screams Heather” (33). “silverware jumps” (35). “The table saws me in half” (90). “lights wink on, the fountains jump” (98). “it coughs and mumbles and spits” (98). “the radio sings louder” (118). “...my feelings... are chewing me alive” (125).

Continued ...

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“I stumble from thornbush to thornbush – my mother and father who hate each other, Rachel who hates me, a school that gags on me like I’m a hairball” (125).

“The sky screams to deliver it” (130). “A mockingbird lands on a low oak branch and scolds me” (168). “My stuffed rabbits crawl out of their burrows, noses awiggling...” (177). “...a thought slams into my head...” (191).

Literary Devices Used in *Speak*

Pun:

Definition: A play on words that sound similar but have different meanings.

Your own example:

In *Romeo & Juliet*: “The heads of the maids, or their maidenheads?” “Draw thy tool ... My naked weapon is out” “You have dancing shoes with nimble soles. I have a sole of lead”

Examples from *Speak* (pg #s):

“Rachelle blows a candy cigarette smoke ring at my face. Blows me off” (21).

“Our cheerleaders are much better at scoring than the football team is” (29)

“Oh, if you put it in a slice of pumpkin pie, it could be a desserted island” (64).

“We get our genes from our mother and half from our father. I thought my jeans came from Effert’s” (147).

Literary Devices Used in *Speak*

Simile:

Definition: Compares two unlike things using the words “like”, “as”, “than” or Resembles.

Your own example:

We were as quiet as a mouse. / He was as cool as a cucumber.

Examples from *Speak* (pg #s):

“I have been dropped like a hot Pop Tart on a cold kitchen floor” (21). “David presses the play and record buttons at the same time, like a pianist hitting an opening chord” (67). “My heart clangs like a fir bell” (71). “The sharp edge of the flap cuts my tongue. I taste my blood. IT’s face suddenly pops up in my mind. All the anger whistles out of me like I’m a popped balloon” (74). “I can feel deep vibrations in my backbone, like a thudding speaker” (90). “The cement slab sky” (91).

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“...my feelings. How can I not find them? They are chewing me alive like an infestation of thoughts, shame, mistakes” (125). “Cold air is easier to breathe, slipping like silver mercury down my lungs and out again” (151). “The words fall like nails on the floor, hard, pointed” (193). “IT breathes like a dragon” (195).

Literary Devices Used in *Speak*

Symbol:

Definition: Something that represents itself and an idea bigger than it.

Your own example:

To Kill a Mockingbird: the mockingbird represents innocence. *Lord of the Flies*: Fire = hope / power / destruction.

Examples from *Speak* (pg #s):

The trees symbolize Melinda's growth. The mirrors symbolize Melinda's ability to face (and cope with) what happened to her. The metal imagery symbolizes the physical pain of the rape. The bunny/beast motif symbolizes the ongoing violation of Melinda's sense of personal safety.

Literary Devices Used in *Speak*

Voice / Tone:

Definition: The style or manner of expression the author uses in speaking or writing to convey their meaning – the author’s attitude.

Your own example:

When your parents tell you to “watch your tone”. The difference in telling someone “nice outfit” when you mean it and when you do not.

Examples from *Speak* (pg #s):

“I think Overbearing Eurocentric Patriarchs would be perfect, but I don’t suggest it” (49). “What do they write: ‘Hope your chicken patties never bleed’ or maybe ‘May your Jell-o always wiggle?’” (171).

Literary Devices Used in *Speak*

Structure:

Examples from *Speak* (pg #s):

The book is divided into four “Marking Periods” of the school year. Small chapters with clever titles make up those four sections. “I am Outcast” is isolated from the rest of the text on the page (4). The author uses the script format to highlight moments of dialogue. “...and he smells like beer and mean and he hurts me hurts me hurts me and gets up and zips his jeans and smiles” (135).

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Others:

Examples from *Speak* (pg #s):

Onomatopoeia: “Tree: “Hush rustle chitachita shhhh...” (167) “Brrrrr-rrrrowww” (187). “... WHAMMO! – a thought slams into my head” (192).

Hyperbole: “The eight front senior in front of me” (8) “If she doesn’t sell a billion shirts and twelve billion belts on Black Friday, the world will end” (57) “It is easier to floss with barbed wire than to admit you like someone in middle school” (108)

Oxymoron: “Tough love. Sour sugar. Barbed velvet. Silent talk” (88).

Word Play: “A ten-pound turkey iceberg. A turkeyberg” (58).

Analogy: “Art follows lunch, like dream follows nightmare” (9).

Contrast: “The bruises are vivid, but they will fade” (198).

Voice / Tone / Word Choice:

4 Melinda's perceptive sarcasm

28-9 Cynicism: "The same boys who got detention in elementary school for beating the crap out of people are now rewarded for it."

29 Cynicism: "The closest we come to worship is the Trinity of Visa, MasterCard, and American Express"

29 "Jennie, Jen, Jenna, Ashley, Aubrey, Amber, Colleen, Kaitlin, Marcie, Donner, Blitzen, and Raven."

29 "Our cheerleaders are much better at scoring than the football team is."

30 "If I ever form my own clan, we'll be the Anti-Cheerleaders. We will not sit in the bleachers. We will wander underneath them and commit mild acts of mayhem"

41 "We are the Merryweather Tigers. Roar."

42 "This is how terrorists get started, this kind of harmless fun."

49 "I know I'm shocked"

49 "I think Overbearing Eurocentric Patriarchs would be perfect, but I don't suggest it"

52 "Just in case we forget that

"we are here to get a good foundation so we can go to college live up to our potential get a good job live happily ever after and go to Disney World"

58 "Kodak logic"

75 Ms. Connors speaks all in one breath – no punctuation

78 "Principal Principal stormed in yesterday, smelling pleasure. His mustache moved up and down, a radar sweep for all things unruly. An unseen hand turned off the radio as he crossed the threshold, and bags of potato chips vanished, leaving the faint scent of salt to mix with vermilion oil paint and wet clay."

86 "Grades, blah, blah, blah, Attitude, blah, blah, blah, Help around the house, blah, blah, blah, Not a kid anymore, blah, blah, blah."

98 Melinda again likens money and shopping to God and religion

104 "The cafeteria is a giant sound stage where they film daily segments of Teenage Humiliation Rituals."

107 "Conjugate This: I cut class, you cut class, he, she, it cuts class. We cut class, they cut class. We all cut class. I cannot say this in Spanish, because I did not go to Spanish today. *Gracias a dios. Hasta luego.*"

108 "It is easier to floss with barbed wire than admit you like someone in middle school"

112 "college-degree posture"

112 description of the doctors talking

117 "It is supposed to bore us into submission or prepare us for an insane asylum."

EXTRAS

Figurative Language / Symbols:

28 “A block of ice freezes our section of the bleachers”

39 “My head explodes with the noise of the fire trucks leaving the station”

59 “A simmering argument, a few bubbles splashing on the stove”

76 “Brendan reaches up a skinny octopus tentacle and casually drops the ball through the hoop. Our boys are unbeatable as long as they are the only team on the floor.”

104 “I am a small ant crouched by the entrance, with the winter wind at my back.”

107 “They swallow her whole and she never looks back at me. Not once.”

108 “We are all dressed in down jackets and vests, so we collide and roll like bumper cars at the state fair.”

109 “Nothing hurts except the small smiles and blushes that flash across the room like tiny sparrows.”

121 “but most of the time the [roadkill] rot until their skin hangs like ribbons over their bones.”

125 “I stumble from thornbush to thornbush – my mother and father who hate each other, Rachel who hates me, a school that gags on me like I’m a hairball.”

150 “Andy Beast swoops over their heads, folds his wings, and sets himself between the girls”